



Ms. Roy-Githinji & Ms. Morency

Alexis Earp, Junior
REPORTER

Many students know Ms. Roy-Githinji, the front office secretary, and Ms. Morency, the principal's secretary, as the friendly faces who greet them in the Main Office. However, some students may not know how much work they do to ensure that the school runs functionally. I recently had the pleasure of interviewing them about their jobs and how the pandemic affected the work they do.

Ms. Roy-Githinji and Ms. Morency are responsible for much of the behind-the-scenes work that keeps the school running, such as keeping track of attendance, scheduling meetings, organizing substitutes when teachers are absent, and collaborating on projects with the assistant principals. It goes without saying that these jobs became more difficult this year. However, Ms. Morency says that she hopes that the work they did gave students some semblance of normalcy.

Ms. Roy-Githinji has only worked at MHS for ten months, but during that time, she said her greatest accomplishment was getting out of her comfort zone to learn new skills and make connections with others. Ms. Morency has worked here for two years and one month, but her greatest accomplishment at MHS happened shortly after she was hired in April 2019. As part of her job, Ms. Morency is responsible for planning graduation, so she had to start working on the plans for the ceremony shortly after being hired. Not only did Ms. Morency have to work on planning graduation right when she started her job, she also had to plan for a graduation that was different from the years prior, since 2019 was the school's first outdoor ceremony.

They both appreciate all of the hard work that Mr. Bauer, Ms. Carlson, and Ms. Page do to ensure the success of students and staff at MHS. They also have a lot of respect for the teachers. Ms. Morency said that before she started working here, she never knew the full extent of the time teachers put in.

Ms. Roy-Githinji started working at MHS last spring, so she had to become acclimated to a new workplace during a pandemic. For Ms. Morency, one of the biggest challenges was the schedule changes. The switch that many students made from hybrid to in-person was incredibly difficult to organize. A schedule change so late in the year interrupted the rhythm, meaning the MHS staff had to adapt quickly and efficiently. Even though the schedule changes this year were difficult to pull off, they both agreed it was worth it because it was the right choice for many students. Organizing substitute teachers was also difficult this year because many did not return because of COVID. Not only that, but there was no attendance clerk this year, meaning Ms. Roy-Githinji and Ms. Morency had to take on even more responsibilities while also having to adapt the rest of their work to a pandemic.

When I asked what makes their jobs worth it, Ms. Morency and Ms. Roy-Githinji both agreed it was their co-workers and the students here. According to Ms. Morency, the students make it so that each day is an adventure. As a student, I know that Ms. Morency and Ms. Roy-Githinji make each day brighter. Next time you stop in the main office, make sure to thank these two community heroes!

Mrs. Shatford

Miranda Connolly, Junior
ASSISTANT EDITOR

In every high school there are a few essential positions: principal, teachers, secretaries, and librarians. Librarians are special; they are the gatekeepers of knowledge clasped within the sturdy bindings of the hundreds of books in their catalogs. Our own high school is fortunate; our librarian, Mrs. Shatford, is one of the kindest and most knowledgeable people in the entire building. Mrs. Shatford started working in the high school back in 2015, when her twins—Christina and Kimberly—were seniors. This is now her sixth year. Before achieving her esteemed title of librarian, Mrs. Shatford was a special education and math tutor at Glover Elementary School. While working there, Mrs. Shatford went to graduate school and got her master's degree in Library Media Studies. When Mrs. Shatford began working at the high school, she was a library media specialist, so the degree came in handy!

This year, there have been a few changes to how the library works, and if a student wants to check out a book, they can email Mrs. Shatford. When she has located the book, she will contact the student so that they can pick it up. If there is a specific book that a student wants, they can give Mrs. Shatford the title and call number. If they need help finding a book, Mrs. Shatford will gladly give them some wonderful options. Her goal is for students to check out books and feel confident that she has created a safe process to do so.

Three librarians greatly influenced Mrs. Shatford's life because they showed her how much of a positive impact one can have on a student's education. Marcia Cannon, librarian of the Abbot Public Library Children's Room, helped Mrs. Shatford's daughters fall in love with reading, a pastime they still enjoy today. Mrs. Colby, former library media specialist at Glover School, is the most influential librarian in Mrs. Shatford's life. When she worked as a parent volunteer in Mrs. Colby's library, Mrs. Shatford helped move Mrs. Colby's collection of books to Village School. Mrs. Colby saw Mrs. Shatford's passion for helping students find the perfect book, and she told Mrs. Shatford on many occasions to pursue her master's degree. Because of this gentle nudge in the right direction, Mrs. Shatford said she is "forever grateful." She also credited her graduate school professor, Beverly High School library media specialist, Barb Fecteau, for showing her how much fun working with teens can be. These three women have helped Mrs. Shatford learn and become the fantastic librarian we all know and love today.

This year, Mrs. Shatford managed the AP exams in a short time crunch and had to devote a lot of time and effort to pull everything off. Mr. Bauer asked

Mr. Bauer asked Mrs. Shatford to take over as the AP Coordinator on April 29; the first exam was May 3. Over 300 students taking over 700 exams, and extreme organization would be needed to succeed at administering all the tests. On the first day, Mrs. Shatford worked for 20 hours on AP and got only three hours of sleep. After leaving school at 9 PM, she worked every night until 3 AM at home, getting up at 6 AM to be at work early to start again. Leading up to the first exam, Mrs. Shatford estimates she got 15 total hours of sleep.

To be prepared for the first day of exams, Mrs. Shatford worked at the school Saturday and Sunday, as well as continuing to work again at home each night. Mrs. Shatford's daughter, Jennifer, a kindergarten teacher in Winthrop, came in after work (and on the weekend) with her to help organize exams, sort AP ID labels, and fill each box with the necessary materials. While her daughter did this, Mrs. Shatford created spreadsheets, contacted families, created a Google Classroom, and worked with the AP teachers and guidance department, all to make sure exam day went as smoothly as possible for students and proctors. While Mrs. Shatford knew the online AP College Board system from the previous year, the new Digital Exam and three testing windows were completely new to her. Mrs. Shatford prioritized what needed to be done, while also learning the 2021 AP changes and incorporating them into the testing environment. I think that this is a stunning accomplishment, and along with the rest of the student body, I hope Mrs. Shatford knows how thankful we are for her hard work.

Although Mrs. Shatford has had many great accomplishments while working at MHS, two efforts of hers stand out. Mrs. Shatford has always made an effort to know the students and help them to the best of her ability every day. Mrs. Shatford told me in an email, "I feel that when someone makes the effort to know your name, that says 'I care.'" Mrs. Shatford has also been revamping the Summer Reading program with the support of the English Department. Mrs. Shatford wants students to enjoy reading, so she has been integrating books that meet all reader levels and fit all genres. Mrs. Shatford told me she has "the best job in the school, and it is rarely ever the same day twice." Because Mrs. Shatford gets to work with so many wonderful colleagues and students, she enjoys coming to work each day.

When I was in freshman year, I used to go to the library after school to get a head start on homework. Mrs. Shatford was always friendly and greeted me with my name, which made me feel a little less nervous about being in a new building. The library has always been an essential part of school for me, and even though I have not been able to use it this year as much as I would like, I'm excited to go back next year. I know that I wouldn't have enjoyed my time in the library nearly as much if Mrs. Shatford hadn't been there. This school simply wouldn't be the same if our library wasn't run by the delightful Mrs. Shatford, who has always managed to put a smile on my face. Thank you, Mrs. Shatford!

Ms. Kim

Sophie Hauck, Senior
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

If you've entered Marblehead High School's Guidance Office, chances are, Vivian Kim, the department's administrative assistant, knows your name. "Knowing you guys—it's what makes my day," says Ms. Kim, who credits her strong memory as an asset in this line of work. "I just remember faces and names and details really well. I think that's why I'm good at administrative jobs."

As I tell Ms. Kim during our interview, this care to recognize students initially surprised me, as after only a few visits to her desk, she greeted me by name. Now that I've sat down to better get to know Ms. Kim, her attention to detail no longer startles me—it's what she's spent her entire career practicing. "I've always had a background in behavioral health and homelessness prevention," explains Ms. Kim. "That was probably a question on an interview, when I interviewed here: 'With your background, how would that translate [to your work at MHS]?' she laughs. "It's just really the respect and listening aspect... lend your ear, help problem-solve; that's really the best way to de-escalate a situation or make somebody feel like they're being heard."

After almost three years at MHS, Ms. Kim describes herself as "the first point of contact" in the Guidance Department. "I help support the five guidance counselors here with literally anything that they need me to do just to help

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make the department more efficient," she says. One of Ms. Kim's most notable efforts was streamlining the Marblehead scholarship program. "When I started, it was a paper process... I didn't find that it was the most efficient way, especially with your generation," she adds. "You guys are all tech-savvy, everybody's on their phones."

In lieu of what lead guidance counselor Christine Chaykowsi describes as the "big production in guidance with crates, folders, and photocopying," Ms. Kim says that she "just took whatever was on paper, put it on a website, obviously not knowing that COVID was going to happen. It actually turned out okay that as I was working through this, when COVID hit for last year's seniors," she adds. "We were able to still offer it to them electronically... they were able to email me, I got back to them right away, so it was just a really good, way more efficient system."

Ms. Chaykowsi agrees. "It is a wonderful benefit for students because they can easily access and submit the applications. The department is very appreciative of her efforts on this important project." Other students reaffirm that Ms. Kim has made a positive impact on their lives, not only concerning scholarships. "She's very positive and energetic," says senior Sophia Piper. "Her energy is very uplifting." Senior Olivia Chickering agrees, adding that Ms. Kim is "approachable, too."

As seniors like Piper, Chickering, and I prepare to graduate from MHS, Ms. Kim has one piece of advice for us: "Once you leave the halls of Marblehead High School, or this town in general, just be open," she insists. "Be open to food, culture, people, diversity, travel. Marblehead is such a small mark on the map that once you guys leave here... if you get a chance to travel, experience anything else, just take that opportunity." This advice makes sense, considering Ms. Kim's love for travel, whether to Vietnam, Spain, or France. Her words also prove how much she cares for MHS students and their well-being.

Ms. Kim is "friendly, outgoing, and caring" in her own words, but she's also a role model, someone who reminds us that a little bit of kindness can go a long way in the work of an administrative role. "It just makes me feel like I've made a connection somehow... it's not just that person in guidance, or the nice lady in guidance, but it's 'Oh, Ms. Kim,'" she says of making bonds with students. So next time Ms. Kim remembers your name, remember this about her: she is a wonderful person to know and trust at MHS. Ms. Kim, thank you for letting us get to know you!

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Last Week's Meeting!

